

promotion agreement. One area that will greatly assist Louisiana companies is reductions on tariffs on chemical exports. Currently chemical product exports accounted for an average of \$360 million per year of Louisiana's exports to Korea between the years of 2008 to 2010. However, Korean chemical tariffs average 6 percent but can run as high as 50 percent. As such, U.S. exporters of chemicals and related products, including chemicals, organic chemicals, plastics, and fertilizers will see significant reductions in tariffs on their exports to Korea. First, 50 percent of U.S. chemical exports will receive duty-free treatment immediately after the agreement enters into force. The remaining tariffs will be phased out over 10 years. Tariffs on such products as silicon and plastics will also be eliminated immediately.

The third trade promotion agreement is with Panama. It is my understanding that Panama is already a great market for U.S. exports, even with an uneven playing field. U.S. products entering Panama are subject to tariffs, but most products from Panama receive duty-free treatment when entering the United States. The trade promotion agreement will encourage further expansion and diversification of U.S. exports in the country. With a major expansion of the Panama Canal, a huge subway project in Panama City and development of the world's fifth largest copper mine underway, the opportunities ahead for U.S. companies in Panama are significant. By entering into a bilateral agreement with Panama, the United States also ensures that our companies can compete for contracts on the \$5.25 billion Panama Canal expansion project. EU and Canadian companies currently have the inside track on these contracts because of their bilateral agreements with Panama.

In terms of Louisiana, agricultural exports to Panama stand to benefit greatly from the trade promotion agreement. While the benefits for the Louisiana rice industry as not as great as with Colombia, duties on U.S. rice exports will be phased out over 20 years. There will also be two separate tariff rate quotas established—one for rough rice and one for milled rice. The milled rice TRQ in year one of the agreement is 4,240 metric tons and will increase 6 percent each year before becoming duty free in year 20. This TRQ will allow for improved access for Louisiana milled rice starting in the agreement's first year of implementation. As I have indicated before, in 2010 Louisiana exported \$427 million in soybeans and soybean products abroad. The Louisiana soybean industry will also see Panama lock in its current zero-tariff treatment for soybeans and soybean meal after the agreement is implemented. Panama is a smaller market than Korea or Colombia but the country's geographic proximity to Louisiana presents unique opportunities for our companies.

With that in mind, let me give you an example of a Louisiana company currently working in Panama. Baker Sales Inc. of Slidell, LA, is a small business that distributes imported steel tubing and fencing. When construction slumped during the recession, so did demand for steel products. They saw their sales drop 20 percent last year when oil/gas contractors pulled orders after the Deepwater Horizon disaster. For 30 years, Baker Sales has imported steel products and sold them to customers largely within a 200-mile radius of Slidell. The company has always wanted to export—particularly recently as they identified opportunities in Panama, where South American immigrants are moving in, necessitating new housing developments and high-rises.

President Robert Baker paid \$800 for U.S. Commercial Service's Gold Key Service last March. He met with a dozen potential clients in Panama over 2 days and one developer he met is interested in ordering \$100,000 aluminum fencing. Thanks to the higher loan limits authorized by the Small Business Jobs Act passed by Congress last year, Baker Sales Inc. received a \$3 million U.S. Small Business Administration 7(a) loan that will help them expand their business by facilitating export transactions with buyers in Panama. They immediately hired two more employees because of the loan. As sales to Panama increase—and potential sales to South Korea materialize—the company expects to hire more employees.

In closing, as chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am aware that cash registers are not ringing like they used to for our small businesses around the country. For this reason, exporting has become a practical solution for small businesses looking to survive and grow. Small businesses across the country have not only used exporting to weather the economic storm, they have proven that what helps our entrepreneurs helps our entire economy. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. exports supported an estimated 9.2 million jobs in 2010—up from 8.7 million in 2009. Furthermore, for every billion dollars of exports, over 5,000 jobs are supported. As our country digs out of the economic crisis, helping more small businesses export for the first time and current exporters reach new countries, should be a top priority. I believe that small businesses can lead us out of this recession by creating new and higher paying jobs and lessening this trade deficit. These three trade promotion agreements will further promote small business exports and help our companies compete in these growing markets.

RECOGNIZING MARTIN'S POINT HEALTH CARE

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I rise today to commend Martin's Point Health Care in Portland, ME, for its

outstanding accomplishment of scoring two five-star ratings from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, CMS, for its Medicare Advantage health plans.

This is truly an accomplishment as a five-star designation is quite a rarity. With fewer than ten plans nationwide receiving this top rating, Martin's Point Medicare Advantage plans are among a very select group. They are also the only Maine health care organization to receive this distinction for 2012.

The CMS five-star rating system was developed to help demonstrate the value of Medicare plans and to help ensure that they meet specific quality standards. It provides the nation's nearly 48 million Medicare beneficiaries with a tool to compare the quality of care and customer service that Medicare health and drug plans offer. The rating system considers several quality measures, such as success in providing preventive services like screenings and vaccines; chronic illness management; and ratings of plan responsiveness, care, and customer service.

Martin's Point is a not-for-profit health care organization committed to providing the best possible health care experience to its patients and members. The organization is comprised of a multispecialty medical group with nine primary care health centers in Maine and New Hampshire. Martin's Point also administers three health plans: a Medicare Advantage plan in Maine, the U.S. Family Health Plan for military families and retirees throughout New England, and a new innovative program called MaineSense for small to medium employers in Maine. Its Medicare Advantage plans cover more than 12,500 Medicare beneficiaries across the State of Maine.

Martin's Point began in the early 1960s in the Camden/Rockport, ME, area when Dr. Niles Perkins obtained federal funding under the Great Society Act of Congress to provide health care services to uninsured or underinsured indigent individuals. These individuals, many of them fisherman and employees of a local fish processing plant, didn't qualify for Medicare, but also couldn't afford health insurance on their own. With the Federal funding obtained, Dr. Niles formed Penobscot Bay Medical Association.

Meanwhile in 1982, Dr. Johann Brower, a colleague of Dr. Perkins at Penobscot Bay Medical Associates, wrote a proposal to purchase some of the land and facilities at Martin's Point from the U.S. Government. Despite the fact that several other organizations, including Mercy, applied for the grant, Dr. Brower's application was the only one submitted on time and was accepted. The purchase price was \$1.00, under the conditions that Penobscot Bay Medical Associates would operate the facility as a not-for-profit for 30 years.

Penobscot Bay Medical Associates, doing business as Martin's Point, became a designated uniform service treatment facility. Maine military retirees were able to come from all over the State to the facility and have their care paid for by CHAMPUS. Access to primary care—family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics—along with on-site laboratory, dental, optometry, pharmacy and radiology was made available to all patients utilizing the facility.

In 1996, under the U.S. Family Health Plan, Martin's Point was authorized as a TRICARE prime provider and awarded their first multimillion-dollar, multiyear contract with the Department of Defense. This all happened under the direction of Dr. David Howes, who became the president and CEO of Martin's Point in 1996.

In the 2000s, Martin's Point expanded their USHFP membership—they now have over 35,000 members in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, and the northern tier of Pennsylvania.

Then, in 2006, they launched their Generations Advantage plans. These are Medicare Advantage options for seniors and persons with disabilities in six Maine counties. They have since expanded so that in 2010, their Medicare Advantage plans are offered in all 16 counties in Maine. They serve over 12,500 members.

In 2008, Martin's Point became one of the first 40 organizations to become a prototyping organization in the Institute for Healthcare Improvements Triple Aim initiative. In 2009, they affiliated with Bowdoin Medical Group, a large group of physicians with five health centers in southern and coastal Maine communities. This acquisition essentially doubled Martin's Point provider base and patient count—bringing their total number of health centers up to 9.

In November 2010, Martin's Point opened the doors of their new, state-of-the-art primary care facility on the Veranda St. peninsula at Martin's Point. This flagship facility, designed with input from providers, patients and other clinical employees, is a fitting tribute to the patient-focused philosophy of Martin's Point and helps them to realize their unending commitment to providing a better health care experience for their patients.

Today, Martin's Point's Medicare Advantage plans are in the top 3 percent nationally based on quality. I am delighted to recognize Martin's Point for this accomplishment, and I wish them all the best in the coming years.

NATIONAL TRADEMARK EXPO

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I would like to recognize and express my support of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's, USPTO, National Trademark Expo.

Trademarks are characteristics of a good or service such as a name, symbol, or sound that identify and distin-

guish one party's goods and services from those of others and help many of us distinguish between authentic and counterfeit merchandise. On any given day, an individual may be exposed to as many as 1,500 trademarks.

Trademarks are useful tools against counterfeit goods, which cost the United States billions of dollars and many jobs each year, as well as undermine consumer confidence in brand integrity when purchasers encounter imitation goods of lesser quality. Through the USPTO's efficient approval process and registration of trademarks, the agency assists businesses in protecting their investments, promoting goods and services, and safeguarding consumers against confusion and deception in the marketplace.

This year's National Trademark Expo will be held on Friday, October 14, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, October 15, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the USPTO headquarters in Alexandria, VA. The Expo will feature educational seminars, children's workshops, story time, guided tours and presentations from some of America's leading large corporations, small businesses, governmental agencies and non-profit corporations.

I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing the USPTO for its continued efforts to educate the public on the important role of trademarks, as well as the benefits of the National Trademark Expo.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL ALFRED FLOWERS

• Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, I take this opportunity to congratulate MG Alfred K. Flowers, U.S. Air Force, for his dedicated service to our country. General Flowers has the distinct honor of being the longest serving member in the history of the U.S. Air Force, and he is the longest serving active duty member in the Department of Defense.

In his present assignment, General Flowers serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Budget and is responsible for planning and directing the Air Force's budget. Over the last 2 years in this role, he led a team of over 160 military, civilian and contractor professionals charged on behalf of the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force to present to the Congress the funding of all Air Force programs. It is his responsibility to organize and present to the Congress annual appropriations submissions as well as various overseas contingency operations requests. His leadership and his keen understanding of the Congress has served the Air Force and the security interests of our country very well during appearances of the senior leadership of the Air Force before committees of the House and Senate. General Flowers' vision, inspirational leader-

ship, and unselfish devotion to duty have resulted in important improvements in the resourcing of and strategic direction of Air Force's missions.

General Flowers began his career as an enlisted supply warehouseman in August 1965 at Grand Forks Air Force Base. He then served as an air transportation specialist for 4 years beginning in September 1967. In 1971, General Flowers became an accounting specialist for the Air Force and served 7 years in that role. After his selection to the grade of master sergeant, General Flowers was commissioned, following graduation from Officer Training School as a distinguished graduate in December 1978. In his first three assignments as a budget officer, he served at the squadron, major command and air staff levels. In 1990, he was assigned as Chief of the Budget Operations Division for Air Combat Command, where he later served as the chief of budget.

The general has served on the Joint Staff as a defense resource manager, and in 1999 was the director of budget programs for the Department of the Air Force. General Flowers also served as the Air Education and Training Command comptroller. His other assignments include director, Center for Force Structure, Requirements, Resources and Strategic Assessments at Headquarters U.S. Special Operations Command, and commander, Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools. Prior to his current assignment, the general was commander, 2nd Air Force, at Keesler Air Force Base, MS.

Of distinct importance and significance, as the comptroller for Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, he budgeted and managed funding of the largest flying hour program in the Air Force, involving 542,000 hours annually and 38 percent of the Air Force's total flying hour program and spanning 21 major weapons systems. As director, Center for Force Structure, Requirements and Strategic Assessments, U.S. Special Operations Command, he spearheaded the largest increase in resources and force structure for Special Operations Forces in the history of U.S. Special Operations Command. His insightful vision and tireless dedication were instrumental in garnering 13,000 additional personnel and \$11 billion in additional funding to enhance and expand Special Operations Forces to successfully execute the Global War on Terrorism.

As the 2nd Air Force Commander, General Flowers led the largest transformation of basic military training in 50 years, expanding training from 6.5 to 8.5 weeks. This modernization was vital to providing realistic expeditionary combat skills training to prepare enlisted airmen for their deployments. His support of combatant commanders included providing over 14,000 joint expeditionary tasking airmen to the area of responsibility and reshaped the role of the Air Force in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.